Art Awaiting the Saviour

by: Dr.Ali Shariati



In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful, Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen:

YOU MIGHT feel that art, whatever form it may take, is a complex subject which requires proper specialization to speak about it and that one who attempts to talk about it must necessarily be an artist himself. You and I both agree that I cannot consider myself to be one. But on the other hand, my words here on art are not of the kind which are common these days. They differ from other talks given on this subject or themes in which one has to deal with the particular area of his specialization.

There are some sciences which are oppressed in our society. They are oppressed in the sense that they have no particular owner. The reason they have no owner is because they do not have a set of clearly definable rules and limitations. At any rate, my words on art here are not of this kind. I am not speaking here as a specialist on the subject of art, but rather as one who is interested in knowing about art.

My words will represent my own point of view. They have, at one and the same time, an aspect of specialization as well as an aspect that is quite general and related to humanity. In this sense, it is contrary to some of the sciences which become so specialized that they become exclusive and others are not allowed to express an opinion about them. This is true of physics, chemistry and mathe- matics.

But art addresses itself to all people while at the same time it requires a skill and a technique. And yet, it is more than that. To a certain extent, the knowledge of it requires education and involves training. But I am only speaking here as one who has been addressed by the art of my own time. It is from this point of view that I will criticize and express my views as to why art is as it is.

To begin with, we are considering the problem of art because we are an eastern people. A part of our people relate to some of the great civilizations of mankind. Slogans accepted by all the Asian and African nations today are, 'We must stand on our own two feet,' 'We must nourish ourselves from our own original, cultural resources. We must return to ourselves. We must pull ourselves out of our state of stupefaction of having passively sunk into western cultural values and models. This is only the starting point.

Some think that it is enough to realize the fact that we should return to ourselves and our own character. No, this is only our point of departure and our slogan. We must

immediately answer the question, 'What is the self?' What is it that we are referring to when seeking to return to our culture?

Unfortunately, in a society whose fate is fixed, stagnant and immobile, the fate of meanings is just as miserable. When a problem or an idea is proposed, it often meets resistance without having been understood, heard, known or recognized properly. It is put down not only by reason, knowledge or words, but through other ethical ways and means, as well.

If a person tries to turn his back on the question, he or she will sink even further in. If one is hard-headed and stands and resists at any price, then one becomes the idol of fashion. When fashionable, it then becomes vulgar to the degree that the person will regret it completely.

The idea of 'returning to self' has now become such that the people who first suggested it, with great difficulties in some coun- tries, are now prepared to pay any price to acquit themselves of the blame. Returning to self has now become equivalent to the revival of superstitions, frozen traditions, fanaticism and a return to the uncivilized, indigenous traditions.

Returning to self means to return to one's own character. It means to breathe with the spirit, seeking the constructive, active and progressive aspects of culture which have, in the past, created societies, civilization and urbanization. It does not mean to return to problems which have, through time and according to needs, died, and are now extinct and dead matter. It never means to explore meanings, feelings, emotions, ideas and philosophies from the begin- ning of time and exhibit them in our modern museums.

We should rather return to ourselves as the reality and truth demands, to our national and ethnic character. We should not do so with an attitude of racism or because of being attached to blood or land, but only because of our relationship to humanity. To return to that character means to gain independence from the attacks of foreign values. Meanwhile, one of the most immediate and genuine responsibilities will be to fight against superstition, archaic values and all the elements which blind and weaken a nation and its insight and keep it from creativity, modernization, progress and continuous change. A return to self does not mean a return to the old, worn out ideas.

But the question remains, which culture is it that we should know? Which culture is it that we should revive in order to receive inspiration from its creative and constructive spirit? Return to self is all right, but what is this true self ? Answering this question presents an immediate problem. We should no longer pose the question, 'Should we or should we not return to self or to our own culture,' we should now, know ourselves. That is, we should start a scientific search. We should seek an up-to-date outlook in our choice of sources and resources, whether human, scientific or cultural and one of them would be the arts.

Contrary to the judgment reflected in the mind of our dormant generation, we are neither weak nor poor in our arts, deeds or manifestations. We should forget standing dumbfounded as primi- tives when confronted with the expressions of the world's progressive art. If we study art in all its dimensions, and not only through translations of the history of art or lives of the artists where the encyclopedias begin with Greece and end with France, but rather, as a reader, an independent historian, if we regard the whole world, its history and its diverse ways, we will see that we do have a profound base in the arts. I would also suggest that modern art, that is, the art characterizing the twentieth century, which contains the rays of the future, is an art which tries, in a new way, to approach the artistic spirit which was the fundamental basis of Oriental art. I will explain how.

Secondly, the concept of art is no longer a minor and secondary part of the life of the well-off and the aristocrats as it was in the past. On the contrary, it is the most serious and essential human problem to be considered in the modern world today, the world which has surpassed its limits of aristocratic palaces and the comfortable life-style of the rich. It has extended itself into the crowd and has spread among the masses. The new art is no longer controlled by the aristocracy, as was the case in the past, but it is the sympathetic intellectual, conscious and sensitive, who leads it. Art is no more a pleasant and diverting tranquilizer to keep our lives closed and comfortable. It leads the philosophies of today and runs ahead of our contemporary ideas. It is essential for us to know art, both because of the way it has extended itself in the human world and because of the serious and supreme responsibility it has acquired today. To what- ever history, culture or land we may belong, we are still living in this century.

Return to self, knowing oneself, on the one hand, is not to limit and confine oneself to one's own model, but rather, only they can know themselves who can know others at the same time. The proverb about language is relevant here which says: Only that person knows his language who necessarily knows a foreign language as well. one only knows his culture, religion, race, talents and history who essentially knows another's history, religion and language. This is why, while our goal and our struggle may be to find our lost and changed character, at the same time, knowing the West and the new waves of the contemporary world and civilization becomes necessary as well.

Everybody blames the poor West for his weaknesses, corruption and absurdities. Who is the foreigner we have learned to become like? What we see today is not the result of imitating the West. It is rather because of not imitating the West. It is caused by not knowing the West. If we had been conscious imitators of the West, we may no longer have been Eastern, but at least we would have been 'some- what Western' whereas presently we are nothing.

The points referred to here are suggestions I made in five lectures delivered in Paris in 1962. One of the lectures I had prepared was on the subject of 'the Spirit of the Iranian Nation.' Another was on the life of the Prophet, 'Mohammad, his Wives and his Names.' It was in response to a Catholic conference which had made the private life of the Prophet into a play. Another of the lectures was about 'Art Awaiting the Saviour.' This lecture was

later translated in Tehran, but for some reason, half of it was left out and the other half rejected. Since then, I have made fundamental revisions in my views on art. My outlook now differs. Although the points and observations I made then are the same, there are some examples, appropriate in the context of the original conference, which I have now changed.

As the title of the subject suggests, I intend to show that art is a religion, a transcendent and sacred truth, a saviour of humanity. It has a responsibility which is great indeed and which rises above materiality. It is a responsibility which is totally human. But art has been turned away from this faith, the religion of art, not by an enemy, since an enemy never causes deviation, but rather, an enemy enlivens its enemy. What transforms a religion and thought, is a friend or an enemy which appears as a friend in society.

The form of all religions has been modified and made to rot from the inside. Look at Islam. When the Qoraish stood against it, it was a growing, radiant, exalted, powerful and proud society. But when the same enemy became Moslem and put on the cloak of a friend, the situation transformed into something else. It took a completely opposite turn. This is why we say that it was not wars and conflicts which caused Islam, Judaism or Christianity to weaken and shift from the true way. But as Jesus says, it was the Jewish priests who corrupted the Jewish faith. It was Papism that caused Christianity to diverge. In the case of Islam, we ourselves have led the faith astray.

Art was not weakened by Plato who opposed poetry and art. Neither was it weakened by those who see it as vain, nor by people with a conscious, clear mind, those who know the Truth of that religion and have recognized the shift from its original goal. The conscious are aware that religion is something else and has now turned into another thing. It has been corrupted by our great artists who have brought it down to today's level of vulgarity.

When a religion declines, as we have pointed out, it takes a direction opposite to its original one, it is metamorphosized, so to speak. There is a group of people who believe religion by itself is metamorphosized and thereby declines. There is another group of half-literate intellectuals who think that the metamorphosis or decline itself is that religion and oppose it on these grounds.

When we turn our attention towards those who are conscious and aware of the real spirit of religion, we are met by a revolutionary thought, manifest in all religions, which is the belief in the final salvationythat which will bring about revolutionary eradication of decay and oppression, that which will obliterate all deviation.

This promised salvation (namely messianism) is essentially a revolutionary thought that arises from the spirit and throws out all false habits, customs and delusions at one time, revealing the true and direct way. It leads art and religion back to its original path.

The state of art is such today that the worst of the duties and the most mischievous of the missions is left in the hands of this world. The role of art should be exactly the opposite of this. On the other hand, there has always been a misuse and inversion of supreme

beauty and truth. As Jalal al-din Rumi says, 'If you see that there is a forged coin current in the market, know that there has been a golden one which was a means of exchange.' No one makes a simple forged coin but always a forged golden coin.

This very imitation directs us to the fact that man is deceived through religion, art and philosophy and this fact should indicate to us that the way to awareness and the construction of human beings is also through them. That which is relevant between myself and my friends becomes an excuse to be used by an enemy who has a different opinion than we do. Is it that when a truth is misused, we should wash our hands of it? Or, the reverse, fight against the misuse? The enemy is armed with this weapon. This is why we should keep the truth and defend it. If we let it go, the enemy will be victorious and we will be defeated.

Historically, the misuse of something was most often carried out in the name of religion and it is now done in the name of art. This is why we should come to know the real direction of art and once we know it, make it known to others. This is a most immediate problem because art has occupied all of our time in the 20th century. This is not correct to my way of thinking. Rather, it is one of the stages that art has to pass through in order to reach a superior one.

For a discussion on art, we should put beauty aside. There is nothing more important and at the same time suspicious in artistic, philosophical and scientific matters than the truth of beauty. Unlike the problem of metaphysics and religion, beauty cannot be denied, even though we usually deny it when we reach a dilemma. But, it is there, for all men are affected by it and everyone recognizes it. If there is any disagreement, it is on the different kinds of beauty in human life, be it in what I see or what I feel in my heart. On the other hand, we are bound to analyze it, and it does not lend itself easily to analysis.

As history shows, people have tried to scientifically and philosoph- ically analyze beauty and develop rules and limitations for it since the time of Aristotle. But all these efforts have been in vain and remain unrealized. In fact, each of the various ideas have certain followers but this shows that, in fact, the arguments have not as yet reached any particular stage.

We do not have time here for me to talk about the various concepts of beauty presented as an idea in the different schools of thought. But I will have to name them as examples where necessary in the course of our discussion.

The understanding of art and beauty is very much dependent upon comprehending the human being. In particular, the problem of art, more than anything else and more than ever depends upon the role of the human being and upon comprehending him. Efforts towards the development and evolution of culture have been strengthened, but they have remained incomplete because the human beings who must live in this civilization and within this cultural framework are not comprehended. Their needs are not known and the knowing of these needs depends upon knowing the human being. Art more than anything else is in need of comprehending the human being because art is usually considered to be

either subjective, that is, completely human or else very objective. Those who believe that beauty consists of a truth which comes into being from the interac- tions of our spirit and an external object, think it is an objective approach, but because we think subjectively, we actually see all things half-subjectively and half-objectively. Thus we cannot say anything about art and beauty unless we first speak about the human being.

The true human being is in a state of becoming, whereas mankind has a specific and distinct existence which can be described from its five hundred thousand year history. The human being's 'becoming' is not the same thing as mankind's 'coming into being'. That is a reality with other kinds of peculiarities.

From the depths of the world of feeling to modern philosophies, multiple mystic, philosophic and even materialistic interpretations have been given. But it all means that to the extent to which a creature is part of nature, society, a tribe and comes into being through physiological and material laws and rules, he or she eventually becomes lonely and then the feelings of loneliness and the desire for freedom arise Based upon these feelings, anxiety and agitation follow and efforts towards once again joining that which, with effort, he or she left and thirsted for, becomes a perpetual ascending evolution which, through choice and effort, takes the shape of a will which compensates for what he or she feels is lacking in the existing world.

It is possible that all the ideas of a human being may not be right, but knowledge means struggling, thinking, making observations and adjusting one's views to reach something. It is not that we should say nothing until we reach 'the knowledge of certainty' and 'the truth of certainty', for it is impossible to reach it all at once unless it be through revelation. We should continue saying and thinking as we reach towards it. We had a teacher who would slap us whenever we made mistakes in reading the Qoran. Thus none of us ever learned to read the Qoran properly.

The paradise that I know or presume to know is subjective and related to the human being. In the story of creation, as I understand it, history is not denied. It is simply not natural history. Rather, paradise is a philosophical-symbolic expression which attempts to analyze contemporary man and the enigma that is called humanity. What does paradise mean ? It means paradise. We see there are still people in paradise. They have not been expelled from it yet. Their world is filled with blessing. The world is full of joy. Man feels rich, satisfied and fulfilled in life. The one who is happy with the thought that parliament may pass a law sometime in the future that would add 1110 to his salary, is in paradise. He has not yet come out of it. The one who has not eaten the forbidden fruit that God asked him not to eat, is comfortable. He is satisfied and happy.

But what is that forbidden fruit? The Old Testament and the Qoran both talk of perception and consciousness. I know some paradisiac people who find pleasure in this world, who find joy in seeing that it is the season for the fresh sheep's milk and yogurt. They sense the coming of spring.

Henry Luper says that there are two kinds of people. One group are a hundred percent objective, realistic and ordered. They have not the least bit of unexplainable pains; they are all reason. But which kind of reason ? The reason that dominates the material world. I met an example of this group in a restaurant a few years ago. I was reading 'Le Monde'. It had an article analyzing the situation in Bolivia. They had just had a coup d'etat. Next to me, a man, while eating his meal, had bent his head trying to read as much as could be seen of the third page. I was not paying any attention. When I realized he was interested, I asked him which page he was trying to read. He said the third page. The third page is economics. That is the one which gives the price of cars, objects and also the daily rate of exchange. It is useful for the wealthy.

As I was interested in the article on Bolivia, he asked me what my occupation was. He wanted to know if I was Bolivian. I said, 'No. I am not a politician, but an Iranian student from Mashad.' I asked him what he was doing. He said he was a student from Israel. 'I live with an income of 600 francs per month,' he said. I asked him why he was interested in the rate of exchange adding, Whatever it may be, what difference does it make to us what the rate of exchange is for the French franc?'

He said, 'You are from a corner of the world and not even a politician, but you want to find out what is going on in Bolivia. But I am a person who is living anyway I can with this 600 francs per month, in this place with these fluctuations in the rate of exchange for the franc, pound and dollar. It affects my life of 600 francs. I buy cigarettes, if the rate of the franc falls, my two francs will be worth two and a half francs and I buy food. If the position changes while I am studying the rate of exchange for the franc, if after a year, the increase of five centimes is added to the price of air fare, all of this has a direct effect on my life. But what you read never has an effect.' I remained silent. We looked at each other for awhile. We could clearly see how each of us was a fool in the other's eyes.

As Henry Luper says, there are two or three resources in man. One is reason, another perception and the other thinking. These are all terminologies. There is only one and that is understanding which forms the quality of what I receive and what I come to know. It is not that which reason says, or that which my feelings, as such, show me. There are different kinds of reason. Each person sees the world according to the character of his reasoning. This includes even the way he sees material objects and colors. Certainly, two types of reasoning will describe one color differently. We do not see the world as it really is, but rather, we see the world as we really are. This need, which is an essential part of man, has been explained with subtlety and extreme profundity in the philosophy of the creation of man.

The man who has had everything, who is satisfied and who has felt no need or suffering and who has had only pleasure and blessings within his reach, was told not to eat the forbidden fruit. But he was deceived by the devil and ate it. He reflected for the first time. It is all very clear what that tree was and the effort of Islamic and Jewish interpreters to verify whether it was an apple tree or a sheaf of wheat or something else is all in vain.

It is clear that after they ate the fruit, as the Qoran says, God came to see them. He called them, but they did not come. They said they were ashamed of their nude bodies. God realized that they had eaten the fruit of that tree. It means that they had not previously been aware of their nudity, indecency, ugliness and shamelessness. This was why they were happy. Because of this, they were in paradise. was why they were happy. Because of this, they were in paradise. It has been clearly and directly stated in the Qoran and the Old Testament that this was the fruit of perception and consciousness. The Qoran explicitly refers to it. It is clear from the text that as soon as man swallowed this forbidden fruit, the sight of paradise becomes an earthly world of pains, smaller than the needs of human beings. This is the meaning of fall and descent.

The Garden of Eden is on earth and it is this earth. We can see now as always that the more human beings eat of that fruit (consciousness the more they sense that their life upon the earth is constricted. They suffer more in sensing the inadequa- cies of others The less they eat, the more peace they have ant the more pleasure they experience. Their needs are immediately met by winning a lottery ticket.

This is why they say that in paradise, by just saying a prayer, they will have everything they want. can there be any thing simpler than this? And is there anything more true than this?

But why is this fruit, which has been eaten more than once by man and is continuously being eaten, forbidden? Because it makes the human being fall from that comfort, satisfaction, ease and pleasure and begin to feel things lacking in the world. The walls of unaware- ness close in on him, narrow the passage to his soul and cause him pain. He is always moving, searching, struggling, working and wanting. He will not be satisfied. Whoever eats from the fruit and attains another stage of consciousness, feels more need and this is what to rebel means.

Who is the one to rebel? The one who is conscious. Rebel against the will of God? What is the will of God ? The will of God is the law which exists in history. The will of God is the law which is inherent in nature. The will of God is the tribal laws and the laws of human societies. It is the law that exists in the physiology of my organism which makes me be part of mankind, a living being in this world.

Hence, the will of God which tells us not to eat from that fruit, is the four bounds, the four forces, the four chains that want to keep us in this atmosphere. When one reaches the state of perception and consciousness, one is freed from the determinations of nature, history, society and the self.

This is what Hegel calls absolute will, free from primordial nature, the primordial state of being, and this very term of Hegel's is what our mysticism is all about. It is with the same words of Hegel that our religion says that we will return to God. It is this very term which in our religion says, 'I created man in the image of Myself' and 'I made him successor upon the earth.' This means that the human being, in his struggle, becomes free from the bonds of nature and the laws that nature has used to build him. But because nature builds

him, it rightfully intrudes. In this latter state, the human being is only an animal or a plant. He frees himself from the prison of history, for as historians say, each person is the result of his own history.

He is freed from prison, laws and social traditions. All human beings are products of their social environment, social laws and relations save those who reach absolute consciousness and are freed from their material and worldly prison. That is, they are freed from their paradise. This freed human being, to the extent that he has freed himself, reaches a state of consciousness and knowledge. We see that it is through this technique that we continue to free ourselves from social laws and thereby dominate society.

The human being of today, changes and builds his society, whereas human beings of the past were built as their tribe or society demanded. No one who is part of a tribe has ever reached the state of consciousness to be able to change his social traditions or change his religion or change his social relations and his life. He does not feel, for there is no 'I' for him. There is no free and liberated human being. The human being who is his own prisoner means that all the drives, attractions and tendencies which nature created in him to enable him to continue living, have bound his will in the trap of these physical demands. He pushes all of these away and then that human being reaches that absolute consciousness, the will to choose, and comes closer to God. He comes closer to the image of God in which he was created.

It is the human being who attains such a level of consciousness and feels liberated and separated who becomes lonely. It is this lonely one who sees the world to be too small. It is this lonely one that feels the anguish, it is the needs of this human being which are not satisfied by the earthly benefits and blessings of nature.

The human being never approaches colorlessness and should not wish to do so. Colorlessness means death. It means becoming a vegetable. The human being should wish to replace inferior needs with superior ones and hope to feel greater and higher pains. Who is the one who has more agitation and thirst? Not the one who is more prosperous or the one less so. This is not the question. It is the one whose needs are more and superior. It is this human being who is more anxious and under more stress.

In an Anthropology Conference held in Belgium, everybody agreed to name the twentieth century, 'The Century of Anxiety.' Why? All of the different considerations in various areas and occasions which I have mentioned here exist, and yet, it is undeniable that today's human being has more knowledge and is more conscious than in the past.

In Durkheim's words, the 'I' has appeared in contemporary man, meaning that the individual has developed, whereas the man of the past was a being living within the fabric of nature. The sap of life and nature were running in his veins and he was nurtured by it. By means of that sap, he was fostered, grew and found peace and order. But the lonely human being of today? But why lonely? Being with everyone? Is this the only need that a human being has? Which need? The need which comes about when an individual understands what he or she should be and is not. This need is constantly

increasing. It reaches the state of more knowledge, consciousness and world consciousness and the need finally becomes independent from nature. At the same time that he knows that nature is a house that is shared with the animal and vegetable kingdom, he also knows it lacks something.

He needs to have the world sense him. The more lonely the human being becomes, the more alienated he feels. What Camus says is that contemporary man is alienated from everything. This alienated man feels closeness and familarity more than ever and he needs to feel familiarity, yet his family and the world are more than ever alienated from him. He senses in his nature, and in the depth of his thoughts that all boundaries will end when his feelings find continuation in this world.

Existence accepts death. But his feelings will continue. He weighs what exists with his spiritual and transcendent needs. He sees that he does not get enough and feels alienated.

This problem of alienation is not only a metaphysical problem. The alienation which Sartre, Camus and Heideger talk about is something which gives existence to art.

Science is the struggle of man to know what exists. Technique and industry are defined as: the means and the mental struggle of human beings for benefitting from as much as is possible of that which is. But art consists of the struggle of human beings for benefits which should exist, but do not. Therefore, the human being who sees himself alone, wants to set up, through art, a relationship with this earth and sky or with the objects which he is alienated from because they are not the same kind as he. He wants to color them with familiarity and understanding.

Thus, one of the things that art does is to help decrease the feeling of alienation of the conscious human being who has fled and alienated himself. How? It allows him to decorate the walls of his prison in the image of the house he wishes he was in and isn't. These objects, this sky, these stars and mountains do not understand him. He is left alone, stone-like and blind among all these objects. Art gives feelings to all these objects.

Our poetry is a perfect example. What most of our poems do is to reconcile the lonely poet with the crowd. This man who is lonely becomes understood through a candle. Art changes the candle into an acquaintance which feels the poet's animosity. Art sees the sun rise not as a revolution of the earth and sky but in a way that makes the sun suddenly appear in the sky. This does not fulfill his needs, but it is like a message from a friend. In this artistic deception, his feelings of alienation and separation from objects in nature becomes refined. Art also does something else. It allows the artist to make and create in the world something that does not exist in nature, but 'he needs it to be'.

The art of the past was kept at the level of imitating nature. Plato said, 'Art is the imitation of nature.' If art is imitating nature, then Plato's words are clear. Art is a game. It is deceitful and false. A man who has realities at his disposal must be made to simulate them. Would anyone simulate water? Where there is water, why should there be its

imitation ? Plato may be right in thinking that it is only a game and all in vain, but I understand it quite differently.

Art is imitating precisely what is beyond the tangible, beyond nature, in order to decorate nature in its image, or to make something the human being wants to be in nature and does not find. It is there to fulfill his feelings of need and agitation, loneliness and most of all, his need to transcend, that is, separate himself from tangible, material needs.

This is why God entrusted art to man. He offered it to the earth, the sky, the mountains and oceans; none accepted it. This does not mean that they were asked, 'Oh mountain or sky, do you want it?' And they said, 'No.' So man picked it up. This means, rather, that mountains and oceans do not have creativity, they are not conscious and do not feel the need of things beyond that which already exists. They cannot feel. They are neither in need nor agitated and pained, nor can they create. It is the human being who picks it up. But what ?

He picks up the ability which he feels he has; he can choose; he can create. This is why I said that art is the expression of the power of creativity in human beings. In continuing it, in decorating it, it continues being. Being is the ultimate goal for everything, both the being of nature and that of the life of society, both organic being and the being of our human limitations.

Art is the expression of the human being's creativity and through the continuation of this being, it becomes an expression of the creativity of God, in order to create what he wants and does not find. Therefore, as Hegel says, 'Art has been evolving from the material and objective towards the perceptible, intellectual and subjective.'

By subjective, I do not mean the bourgeois idealism that one might have in mind and we all condemn. I have nothing to do with its philosophy. Rather, in the beginning, the human being was an absolute, non-conscious soul that penetrated the organisms of nature. Then the evolutionary process of that soul reached the human being. The human being is becoming conscious. The more conscious he becomes, the more he can sense the abstract which he himself represents. That is, as I see it, art brings consciousness to the unconscious soul of the human being because art, awakening the sense of the abstract, allows us to come to know God.

If you look at our own literature, the poetry of Manuchehri, Roudaki, Farrokhi, their wishes, their lives, their ideals and their needs are all objective, material and concrete. What are they longing fort They are longing for what there is but they do not possess, whereas Rumi is longing for that which does not exist.

It does not exist, we have found it.

That non-existent is my longing.

Art is searching for 'that' and industry is looking for 'this'. Industry is trying to find what there is in nature which is out of man's reach and reach it. This is exactly the opposite of what art is searching for. As we said, man seeks that which is not.

The more one struggles, the more one creates and the more one evolves, the more one will feel that one is becoming separated. As a principle, this is the motive for the evolution of man.

Manuchchri's love poems are at a very objective level and they do not have the least bit of human feelings in them. They are exactly paradise. Whereas when we reach Saadi and then Hafez and Rumi, there, in great abstraction, lies the story of feelings and expressions of the spirit. The world is imprisoned and paradoxically it is not there. One cannot even identify objectivity and materiality. Sometimes, when one wants to address this subject, the addressed feels him. He can well see that it has become a kind of consciousness. It has become exactly like the image of love and the breath of feeling. Sometimes it is not realized. Sometimes we cannot realize it.

What can I call It when I don 't know it?

This is not about the celestial lover, although it has reached the level of abstraction and transcendence. One can confuse them since limits belong to the sphere of objectivity. The difference of opinion as to what wine is made from and what it is, is all useless. The problem is to reach abstraction. In abstraction there is no boundary anymore and none of these categories and limitations exist in one's feelings. He is Manuchehri, as long as he uses words. It is the wine which he has received from his lover. After he becomes old and religious, it is obvious that his wine is something else and his lover of another sort. It is in this evolved feeling that he approaches abstraction. These arguments are appropriate in the study of life and works of Manuchehri and Farrokhi.

The abstract feelings reach the point of saying,

What can I call it when I don 't know it?

Why should I say I'm not, when I am in love with it ...

It is in the completely subjective, in the depths of the individual, far from the various natures and material objectives that this poetry reaches new poetry-modern poems.

My friend, Dr. Mokhtari, translated a book and gave it to me to read. This modern new novel was all about the description of objects. When you open a new novel, all you see is words about buses, buying tickets and cars and their honking. They are all describing common everyday life. It would seem as if-literature and art had escaped out of the interior essence of the human being. It has become objectivized and materialized. But in this novel, it says that, on the contrary, none of the external objects are the ones I am talking about. The tree I am talking about is not the tree that grows in the garden. It is the tree whose image is in my heart. I describe it. That man, of whom I am speaking, is

different from the man that the biographer or the doctor talks about. He is a man who is in my mind. Therefore, I see him differently and it means something different to me.

Opposed to what Aristotle says, art has always been struggling to free itself from all that is objective, concrete and a subject of science based upon the humanism of ancient Greece, on the beauty of reality, on the beauty of the mountains and the valleys and, most of all, on the beauty of the human body. It tries to free man from these things as well.

But in the course of history, whenever art has been expressed freely and has not been the reflection of physiological needs, it has struggled to free itself from its bonds. All the artistic movements formed by artists, either with supernatural feelings or by ones without them, have tried to make art not so much a means to picture and describe reality or to define man, as his clear, existing model, but to use and recognize it as an inevitable challenge, a divine, creative becoming, the evolving of feelings and of the essential truth of man's being.

The most material of the arts is sculpture. Painting is more close to perfection. Why is it more perfect? Because it has one dimension less. It is two dimensional. As it has one dimension less of nature, it possesses one more potential to approach subjectivity. That is why we have in art today, great men such as Picasso. But in sculpture, such geniuses have not been able to develop, for they are bound in three dimensional forms.

Although dance is a classical art and a physical art, at the same time, that which it tries to embody is quite in accordance with the spirit, feeling and perception. Therefore, it can be the expression of an individual's inner feelings and an abstraction. Music has only one dimension which is time. Poetry is the absolute abstraction. This is why we see that in poetry we are able to express concepts in their highest form, whereas other fields do not lend themselves as readily.

Today, sculpture, which is the most material expression of old and new art, no longer tries to make us think we can make a statue of a champion or conceptualize the picture of a man or a woman. The artist does not use stone to build a body. A painter does not create a face with paint. They speak with stone and paint. Today we see that we can create better sculpture and painting than some of the works of artists.

An artist does not want to paint a nose like a real nose. How much is his own nose worth that he should try to simulate one? He creates a human being like Picasso created with one eye in the middle of his forehead. What is he trying to say? He wants to speak. The artist does not want to express that which is. He wants to say that the human being of today has become one dimensional. Picasso did not paint a painting of war and peace. He showed the philosophy ant meaning of war and peace. Just as I use the words of war and peace to express human problems, he uses the brush to speak of it, not by giving us the image of it.

Georges Saurat, a great impressionist painter, who might even be called one of its originators, says, "I may draw a horse. But this is not the horse in the field. This is the

meaning and the concept of horse, expressed and embodied in the figure of a horse." He says, 'The people I have shown in the island painting, are people who have the curvature of their bodies composed of very fine points which were nothing but subjective images. We do not take any of these forms as conforming with nature. We take this as a joke. Certainly it is always easier to laugh at a new creation and no one needs any specialization or fairness in order to be able to beat it down. It is enough to say, 'I do not understand it. In this way, I will not be the one condemned, but him.'

The artists who painted in that style, where the curvature of bodies were made of an endless number of fine points and were nothing but subjective forms, made their paintings and colors clearer than those of Manet and Picasso and all the impressionists. The life shown in the picture belonged to no one. It was the reflection of a dazzling light. Spirit, substance and breath were foreign to it. Motion was removed from it. A confused scene flooded with the sun in an impressionist painting is not a piece of earth over which the silk of the sun draws itself.

He is not concerned with how he sees the sun or which kind of sun he needs. He creates it, as Khaqani and our other poets created the sun. There were some unfamiliar trees standing upright in the painting and some animals that Fourier, the famous zoologist, could never have imagined. The meaning of creating from non-being into being, is a responsibility of God and art, meaning the divine expression of art, the human being. The people Gaugin binds together are bound by something which Gaugin has created.

A sea could be seen which seemed to have flooded out of the mouth of a volcano, a sky that no eyes have as yet seen. There were the wild men, the alienated, the nonexistent beings with strange figures. He wants to talk about this human being. He is searching for him. He does not exist, so he creates him. This is who Rumi is looking for. He creates non-existent beings with strange figures. He wants to talk about this human being. He is searching for him. This is the human being whom Rumi seeks. He creates the non-existent, the human being that all men are looking for. one reaches the sun through mysticism, while another reaches it through his paintings. This human being, with his strange look, has hidden the unbound mystery in his innocent eyes.

Each signify something expressed through imaginary veils of pink and violet colored flames. Each one tells a meaning. It is a story with no veils, strange scenes, where animals and wild flowers grow and blossom under the fiery rays of the sun. Which Sowers grow and blossom in fire? Even plaster and stone transform into meaning, feeling, reflection and abstraction under artful hands.

Heidegger sees the human being and his true essence, which science has always neglected. Science keeps him from watching nature and searching into it. It still does. Some blame science, the science which alienates man from himself for not allowing the human spirit to liberate itself from the bonds holding it to nature's laws. For the only thing science and industry are concerned with is nature. They have left man alone.

Sartre feels the extension of the same loneliness and considers the world as lacking everything. He says that the human being should construct himself with his thinking and his will. Camus finds the alienation of man, the plague, here in this world. The altar that Lucres speaks about is this very world.

For whom? For the person who has reached that alienation and loneliness. That is the plague, the alienation. He reaches the state of absurdity and life becomes useless. Who? The human being. Which human being? The one who until now accompanied the 17th, 18th and 19th century bourgeoisie who wanted to build a philosophy of paradise for himself in a philosophy which would replace religion. The bourgeoisie had forgotten that man rebelled from sin millions of years ago in the paradise that God had made for him, where there was consumption, prosperity and joy.

How can you have the man who has reached such transcendent consciousness, stay calm and feel satisfied in the bourgeois paradise that you are making for him in life, in time and on this earth? The human being revolts. The revolt that we see is the revolt of the comfortable man. It is exactly the same revolt that he made in paradise.

Today, man becomes conscious and revolts. If any man, wherever he may be, in the divine paradise and the garden of Eden, attains consciousness, he revolts against all there is, longing and struggling in love for what there should be. This is the law of humanity.

We see today that art in the East has revolted against the humanism of Greece and the humanism of the Renaissance which went towards pleasures, showing the beauties of nature, the volume and line of the human body, human beauties and remaining in the framework of objectivity and reality. Along with philosophy and well-off people today, the revolt is also against the bonds of being and objectivity, not drowning oneself in the idle comforts, rather, continuing and finding the continuation of the human being.

Realism means remaining within the framework of what exists. This is stagnation in man which does not fit the rebelling, ever- thirsty man. In the same way, idealism is a betrayal of man who is true and real.

Along with philosophy and the human being of today, art is the standard bearer of this revolt against nature and objectivity. It is the standard bearer of man's self-discovery and the blossoming of and giving blossom to the transcendent possibilities and even those which transcend the human intellect and logic.

Art of today, in opposition to the past, does not remain in amusement, rather, it is to build something higher than the human being and humanity. This is a mission and a trust. As Metterling said, 'When God had made all things, He reached man. He stopped and left the creation to man himself.' Creative human being means artist, the human being who cuts away from everything, while he is creating, and with his creativity, he creates his art, he cries, he tries, he builds himself and he expenses himself. Whoever writes a new book, creates himself. A human being becomes his own creator and builds himself to the extent

that his art contains the sense of his own humanity, not in the sense of his knowledge or his craft.

Where is the art today that takes the form of a bourgeoisie philosophy of entertainment as its mission for life? It is n the paradise which he wants to build on earth which consists of eating, pleasures and remaining in paradise. To consider art as pleasure, a pastime activity, a relief from the rigid industrial life, is to give this lowest of tasks to the most sacred of activities, that is, art, as if it were only to entertain whereas art should be put into the hands of a creator, as prophecy has been sealed.

Translation by: Ms. Homa Fardjadi